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United States Department of State  
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# SPOT

## Intelligence Report

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### FOR URGENT READING

VENEZUELA COUP

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## ***SPOT Intelligence Report***

(As of 11:30 EST, February 4, 1992)

### Venezuela: Attempted Coup

Status of Conflict. The attempted coup is failing. Government of Venezuela (GOV) forces reportedly are in command, although pockets of resistance remain. The lieutenant colonel identified as the leader of the rebel forces has appeared on Caracas television, asking his followers to lay down their arms. The rebels have yet to clarify their objectives. Despite reports that loyal troops are in control of key government buildings, including the downtown Air Force Base that was the site of much early morning fighting, shots are still being heard in that area, according to Embassy Caracas. The situation is returning to normal in downtown Caracas, away from any fighting.

The loyalist National Guard has blocked all roads leading to Caracas. Valencia apparently remains in rebel hands. In Maracaibo, a major center of conflict, rebels still held a TV station, and two or three military installations as of 1000 local time this morning, according to DAO reporting. The governor of the state may still be in rebel hands. F-16's based at Maracay have buzzed Caracas in a show of support for loyalist troops.

At least four soldiers have died in the fighting, although that number is likely to climb. Media reports cite 54 casualties without distinguishing between dead and wounded.

Exerting Control. CAP has announced a 10-day suspension of constitutional guarantees to be submitted for congressional approval this afternoon. The suspension will restrict freedom of movement, speech, association and limit strikes and demonstrations. Curfews may be imposed if necessary.

Domestic Support. There has been no massive outpouring of public support for the government such as the street demonstrations that helped prop up the Alfonsin government in Argentina several years ago. Press reports depict a public opposed to the coup but unenthusiastic about the CAP government. National labor and business leaders have expressed support for the government.

International Support. In addition to President Bush's phone call to CAP and the Department's statement that has appeared in the Caracas media, statements of international support for CAP and democratic rule mounted rapidly as news of the attempt spread. Strong statements have been issued by the Spanish and French Foreign Ministries. King Juan Carlos has spoken with CAP by phone, and, according to TV broadcasts, the Spanish are organizing a

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coordinated EC statement. Fifteen hemispheric presidents have issued a joint statement expressing solidarity with CAP and democratic rule. A Radio Havana editorial this morning noted that a majority of Venezuelans had rejected the coup attempt, but cited the events as proof that democracy and political and economic stability cannot survive in the absence of development and social justice.

AmCits: There are no reported problems with the 338 official Americans and dependents and 21,977 amcits living in Venezuela.

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